

## THE CORRELATION BETWEEN THE ELEMENTS OF QUALITY IN SOCIAL MEDIA AND SOCIAL MEDIA USING BEHAVIOR OF THE YOUTHS IN THE CENTRAL REGION OF THAILAND

Promphak Bungbua<sup>1</sup>, Nipada Trirat<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Education, Rattana Bundit University

<sup>2</sup>Faculty of Education, Srinakharinwirot University

e-mail : prompakk@hotmail.com

### Abstract

The objectives of this study are 1) to explore the social media using behavior of the youths in the central region of Thailand, 2) to explore the quality of social media used by the youths in the central part of Thailand, and 3) to explore the correlation between the elements of quality in social media and social media using behavior of the youths in this region. The data was collected from the youth aging 15 – 25 years old residing in the central part of the country who normally use social media for at least 5 hours a week. The researchers employed the Cluster Sampling Method to select the sample groups of 100 people from 22 central provinces, totally 2,200 people before using the Purposive Sampling Method. The questionnaire of overall 0.73 Reliability was used in data collection. The descriptive statistics including Maximum, Minimum, Percentage, Arithmetic Mean, and Standard Deviation were used in data analysis as well as Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The results of the study revealed that 1) The quality social media should present new contents regularly. The contents should be easy to understand, accurate, and practical. The youths needed to be trained in social media using skills as well as to participate in activities promoting correlation and social media using with the members in their families. Moreover, there should be the areas facilitating safe and creative social media using and the online learning network should be established. , 2) The overall quality of social media was in the high level., and 3) The social media using behavior of the youths in the central part of Thailand was related to each element of social media quality.

**Keywords :** Element of Quality, Social Media, Social Media Using Behavior, Youths, Central Region

### Introduction

Social media is a new format of channel that contributes participation between the senders and the receivers by expressing comments to the issues independently. It allows two way communications which the receivers could play more important role in

the communication as well as create the communities of people with the same interests so that they could communicate with each others faster and more efficiently through the network of information. The internet has recently been one of the important factors affecting users in products and service purchasing

since they generally use the comments or satisfaction feedbacks of the members shared in groups in the internet as the supporting information before deciding to purchase any products or services (Saranya Kerkhao, 2010, p.97). The networks on the internet are not only the channel where the users could share their opinions; they are also used to promote the new products to larger audiences in a short time. Besides, social network is found as a source of diverse and quality information that is easy to access. That is the reason why the majority of the social network users are the students and the company employees. This conforms to the study of global internet using behavior (Universal McCann, 2008, p.1) indicating that 82.9% of the users liked to watch the VDO Clip, 72.8% of them liked to read the stories in the Webblog, 63.2% of the users liked to visit the website sharing photos, 57.3% of the users liked to update their profile on the social network websites, 45.8% of them shared information and comments, and 38.7% of the users started to write or manage their own Webblog. While there were 38.5% of the users uploaded and shared the VDO clips on the websites, there were 33.7% of the internet users experienced using RSS Feeds. Definitely, there are plenty of the study stating that internet and social network had been used as a channel in communication and publication. Settapong Malisuwan (2010, p.1) studied social media using method and found that the use of social media was not limited to the teenagers anymore even though the teenagers were the main target group in the last couple years. The world of social media focused on the students and teenagers; however, the developed social media has attracted people in different ages to use it for diverse purposes.

National Electronics and Computer Technology Center or NECTEC (2010, p.1) found that using social media websites was getting more popular as the channel for joining activities via internet or social network. It fulfilled the needs of people sharing common interests on the internet. At the same time, it allowed them to share information and knowledge, 63.7%, and photos and VDO clips, 59.1%. Apart from this, it is found that the source of knowledge and the channel of independent opinion and comment sharing are the main reasons for people to use the social network. Furthermore, the study of social media using behavior of people in 46 countries around the world conducted by TNS (Marketing OOPs, 2010, p.1), revealed that Malaysia had highest number of social media users who mostly spent maximum 9 hours per week using social media, meanwhile people in Russia spent 8.1 hours a week for social media and the Turkish used social media for 7.7 hours a week; while Thailand ranked the top country that 92% of posts on social media were photos. Moreover, the Thai users were found to use less other types of media. There was 61% of the sample group spent their time surfing the internet everyday, watching TV for 54%, listening to radio for 36%, and reading newspaper for only 32%.

Educational institutes are the organization applying computer network and social media in communication and collaborative learning. To promote educational management, network and social media can be used as learning development tool for teachers and students. Moreover, it could enhance both of them the skills of using information technology in their daily lives and communication in learning context with the computer, programs, and internet that are free of

charge. It could also reduce the use of paper which is one of the causes of Green House Effect. In addition, teachers, students, and executives of the institutes could review teaching methods, learning methods, educating methods, knowledge exploring methods, and learning development methods through the network that lead to sustainable educational development. (Tatthanan Phumnot, 2010, p.538). This is similar to the study of Lenhart et al (2010, p. 1) focusing on social network websites and teenagers in the U.S.A. The results of the study indicated that 55% of the teenagers used social media. The female teenagers preferred to use social media to maintain their relationship with their old friends. Meanwhile the male teens generally used social media for seeking new friends and girl friends. Malaga (2010, p.52) conducted the study by using Wiki as the base to create activities for learning projects of the students. The results of the study revealed that 1) using Wiki in the classroom could facilitate the students to learn the direction of important technologies, 2) teachers could give feedbacks to the students continuously, and 3) Wiki facilitated efficient communication between each group of students as well as contributed to the improvement of their reports. Similarly, Brady (2010, p. 8) studied the use of social online websites, a case study of benefits of learning by Ning website in university level. The results of the study indicated that the students acknowledged that Ning was useful for learning because it facilitated convenient cooperation, information sharing, and discussion among the students in longer time compared with Face – to – Face learning. The researcher also recommended that the educational based social media websites could benefit distance education effectively since it provided

the space or community for the users to participate, share, and connect to the news and information in various ways. This certainly leads to the development of education and society of learning where information could be shared and exchanged extensively. For that matter, it reduces limitations in terms of location, time, shorts of learning materials such as textbooks and academic papers. The researchers are therefore interested to explore the use of social media in teaching and learning process in higher education institutes in the central region where is the center of business and education institutes using information technology in education management. The study of social media using behavior for learning in Thai youths would guide them to use social media that is appropriate to their learning activities; whereas the teachers could efficiently interact with their students so that they could reach the highest level of learning efficiency.

#### Objectives

1. To explore social media using behavior of the youths in the central region,
2. To explore the quality of social media used by the youths in the central region, and
3. To explore the correlation between the elements of quality in social media and using behavior of the youths in the central region

#### Limitations

1. The sample group in this study is the youths aging 15 – 25 years old following the criteria prescribed by the United Nations. This group of youths normally spends at least 5 hours a week using social media.

2. The studying field is the central region of Thailand where information technology is widely applied in educational institutes.

3. The variables of the elements of quality in social media can be divided into 5 aspects including trust in social media service providers, trust in network users, commitment, non-conflict feeling, and satisfaction.

### Research Methodology

This survey study was conducted by the following methods:

1. Study, analysis, and synthesis of concepts, theories, and information related to communication, social media, and learning management,

2. Study of social media using behavior of the youths in the central part of the country by using the questionnaires with the following details

#### Sample and Population

The population in this study is the youth 15 – 25 years old as required by the criteria prescribed by the United Nations who generally spend at least 5 hours a week to use social media living in the central provinces where the information technology is widely applied in the educational institutes including Angthong, Ayutthaya, Bangkok, Chainat, Kampaeng-pet, Lopburi, Nakhorn Nayok, Nakhorn Pathom, Nakhorn Sawan, Nonthaburi, Pathum Thani, Petchaboon, Pichit, Pitsanulok, Sukhothai, Samut Prakan, Samut Sakorn, Samut Songkram, Saraburi, Singburi, Supanburi, and Uthai Thani. The researchers employed the Cluster Sampling Method to select total 2,200 people of the sample group, 100 people from each of 22 provinces, before using the Purposive

Sampling Method to collect the data from the sample group spending at least 5 hours a week to use social media.

#### Instrument

The instrument used in data collection is the questionnaire of social media using behavior of the youths in the central region. The questionnaire it is divided into 3 parts with total 40 questions:

Part 1 : Personal information and social media using behavior, 25 questions with multiple choices.

Part 2 : 15 questions with 5 rating scales focusing on opinions in elements of quality in social media in aspects of the users' trust in social media providers, trust in network users, commitments, non-conflict feeling, and satisfaction

Part 3 : Additional suggestion

The researchers created the research instrument by the following procedures:

1) The researchers reviewed the concepts, theories, textbooks, and studies related to social media, social media using behavior, characteristics of social media, and elements of quality in social media as the guideline to create the questionnaire.

2) The researchers applied the information to draft the questionnaire for social media using behavior that covered the definitions used in the study.

3) The researchers presented the draft questionnaire to 3 specialists in communication and technology for education to review the content by using the index of item objective congruence before adjusting the questionnaire upon the suggestions of the specialists.

4) The researchers piloted the questionnaire with 40 people with the conditions similar to the sample group.

5) The researchers conducted Item Analysis and considered Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation (r) of the questionnaires. The quality item is the ones with r value beyond 0.20; the reliability of all items in the questionnaire is 0.73.

#### Data Collection

The researchers took two months for distributing copies of the questionnaire to sample groups who met the criteria and were convenient to fill in the questionnaire.

#### Data Analysis

To analyze the data, the researchers employed the descriptive statistics of Maximum, Minimum, and Percentage to analyze personal information and behavior of the samples. Meanwhile the Arithmetic Mean and Standard Deviation were used to explore opinions related to elements of quality in social media. The Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation was used for correlation analysis.

#### Conclusions

##### Part 1: Research Findings on Social Media Usage Behaviors of Thai Youths in the Central Region

The majority of research samples were female youths aged between 19 and 21 studying in a university level, followed by female samples studying in a junior high school level or equivalent ages. The findings revealed that the social networking websites that obtained the greatest access by the samples was Facebook, followed by Line Application, YouTube, and Instagram. They connected themselves to online social media sites mostly by using their smart phones. The frequency of using online social networking was on a daily basis, spent

longer than 3 hours a day online for more than 3 years. The samples spent their time online all day in proportional distribution. The objectives of using online social media were mostly to communicate with friends, obtain data for the learning purpose, and access search engines for the expansion of educational opportunity.

The opinions of the research samples towards satisfactory characteristics of social media networking websites were up-to-date contents, useful and practical information, and accurate and understandable descriptions. The samples also required to be trained for effectiveness in using online social media networks for promoting a proper usage and obtaining the most advantage of using them. In addition, the samples wanted to have the activities that encourage positive correlations between youths and their guardians in that they can spend time together learning how to use online social media effectively to provide white internet areas and create “Friend-to-Friend” social networking.

##### Part 2: Research Findings on Quality of Online Social Media

The findings revealed that the overall quality of online social media was at high level ( $\bar{X} = 4.02$ , S.D. = 0.40). The analysis of individual aspects showed that in the aspects of users’ trust in social media providers gained the highest level ( $\bar{X} = 4.12$ , S.D. = 0.57), followed by users’ satisfaction ( $\bar{X} = 4.06$ , S.D. = 0.59), non-conflict feeling ( $\bar{X} = 4.01$ , S.D. = 0.59), and promise and commitment ( $\bar{X} = 4.00$ , S.D. = 0.57). The aspect of trust in other social media users received the lowest score ( $\bar{X} = 3.93$ , S.D. = 0.56) as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Arithmetic Mean and Standard Deviation of Elements of Quality in Social Media

Items	Mean	S.D.	Interpretation
Trust in social media providers	4.12	0.57	High
Trust in network users	3.93	0.56	High
Commitment	4.00	0.57	High
Non-conflict feeling	4.01	0.59	High
Satisfaction	4.06	0.59	High
Overall	4.02	0.40	High

### Part 3: Correlations between Quality of Online Social Media and Users’ Behaviors

The findings indicated correlations between quality of online social media and users’ behaviors. The aspect of the users’ trust in social media providers was found the highest level of correlation coefficient (

$r = .772$ ), followed by the aspect of the trust in other social media users ( $r = .759$ ), users’ satisfaction ( $r = .662$ ), and promise and commitment ( $r = .652$ ). The aspect of non-conflict feeling of the users was found the lowest correlation with users’ behaviors ( $r=.620$ ), as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Correlation between the elements of quality in social media and the behavior of the users

Correlation		Trust in social media providers	Trust in network users	Commitment	Non-conflict feeling	Satisfaction	Overall
Trust in social media providers	Pearson	1	.458*	.340*	.290*	.321*	.759*
	Correlation	.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	2198	2198	2198	2198	2198	2198
Trust in network users	Pearson	.458*	1	.313*	.369*	.374*	.772*
	Correlation	.000	.	.000	.000	.000	.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	2198	2198	2198	2198	2198	2198
Commitment	Pearson	.340*	.313*	1	.284*	.382*	.652*
	Correlation	.000	.000	.	.000	.000	.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	2198	2198	2198	2198	2198	2198
Non-conflict feeling	Pearson	.290*	.369*	.284*	1	.532*	.620*
	Correlation	.000	.000	.000	.	.000	.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	2198	2198	2198	2198	2198	2198
Satisfaction	Pearson	.321*	.374*	.382*	.532*	1	.662*
	Correlation	.000	.000	.000	.000	.	.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	2198	2198	2198	2198	2198	2198

Correlation		Trust in social media providers	Trust in network users	Commitment	Non-conflict feeling	Satisfaction	Overall
Overall	Pearson	.759*	.772*	.652*	.620*	.662*	1
	Correlation	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.
	Sig. (2-tailed)	2198	2198	2198	2198	2198	2198

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

## Discussion

The research findings indicated correlations between quality of online social media and behaviors of its users who were Thai youths in the central region. It is probably the users would like to connect themselves to other friends through online social media sites. They can be able to create their online personal zones to be shared with society without any discrimination by career, social class, or position. Communicating through these media, users mostly focus on making correlations and interaction with friends and society. The users decided to use reliable social media networking equipped with trustworthy system security and can provide proper applications for interpersonal interaction and communication with a good quality service. The research samples believed that to make a good correlation through online social media, the media users need to provide actual information about themselves, being altruistic and kind to one another, and being able to find solutions for others when they are in need (Ittipon Preetiprasong, B.E.2552, p.1). In addition, it was found that the Thai youths in the central region gave priority to making good correlation through online social media and trying to create positive bonding and enjoyment among

online users as well as using social media as a medium of maintaining their correlations with other online friends. The findings were congruent with the study (Monta Ruangkajorn and Soontree Saksri, B.E. 2557, p. 260) that found occurrences of interpersonal correlations among people specifically when they are in need of assistance and support from one another. The online correlations would continuously maintain through interaction such as keeping advisory conversations, enhancing coordination and sharing together among people to build confidence and expectation with one another. By this means, people can feel a sense of honesty and sincerity of other people to build good correlations. It is believed that positive correlations can encourage team work ability, provide pleasant workplace environment and positive attitude, boost morale and encouragement in work, forgive for any mistakes and ultimately lead to strong and long-term correlations.

Advantages of using online social media by Thai youths in the central region can be a channel for higher educational institutions to communicate and create interaction between learners and learners, teachers and learners, and learners and educational institutes in terms of communication, public relations, and institutional image creation to let learners,

guardians, and other interested persons know about the institutions. This finding is congruent with a research study conducted by Wichit Auaon (B.E. 2553, Abstract) who found that using Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) method to create brand equity through social media, in the point of view of students in higher educational institutions, received a positive and wide response from the students. Similarly stated by Pasin Pititanarit (B.E.2551, p.1) that online social media have significant characteristics of providing space for people to create themselves by expressing their ideas, presenting their creative works from all over the world, sharing knowledge and useful information to others who have the similar preferences, being reference sources for obtaining data, and creating co-working space. Moreover, online social media need thought and thinking, knowledge and implementing from knowledgeable people in that the new knowledge can be shared and reviewed continuously by well-informed persons through quick and efficient online communications.

## Recommendations

### Recommendations for Implications

1. The findings of this study can be used as guidance for educational institutions in improving their curricula by implementing information technology into modern teaching and learning management strategy. Knowledge sharing in online community can take

place anywhere and anytime without limitations through information technology platform.

2. There is probably an efficient channel for public relations or marketing people to publicize and present useful information on online social media to communicate with adolescence users. This communication must be posted continuously by intervening in the users' daily life.

3. Public and private agents in both forms of online social media and traditional media such as radio broadcast, television, and newspaper should participate and have shared-responsibility in order to present useful contents to juvenile users, provide them up-to-date information, enhance their media literacy, and know what the media is up to.

### Recommendations for Further Study

1. Further study may focus more on reviewing adolescent users' behavior in using online social media for every 3–5 years as some factors such as social context, age, and emergence of new technology will have been changed over time, as well as their attitude and conscious mind will also change. Therefore, new groups of youths should be selected as research samples for future study.

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